

Should Reserve Entry-Level Training Be Integrated With Active Reconnaissance Entry-Level Training?

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Should Reserve Entry-Level Training Be Integrated With
Active Reconnaissance Entry-Level Training?
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Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Reserve Affairs Plan (HQMC/RAP) has had difficulties in recent years effectively managing the entry-level training pipeline for non-prior service reserve enlisted accessions for the primary military occupation specialty (PMOS) 0321, Basic Reconnaissance Man. The ineffective management and inadequate accountability of reserve-enlisted entry-level 0321 personnel has negatively impacted the use of fiscal year training funds for entry-level personnel.

HQMC/RAP is responsible for managing fiscal year non-prior service reserve accessions through the entry-level training pipeline. The entry level training pipeline consists of recruit training, Marine combat training, and military occupational school. HQMC/RAP is required to access over six thousand non-prior service entry-level enlisted personnel per fiscal year in support of Marine Forces Reserve. HQMC/RAP plans for and funds fiscal year entry level training using Reserve Personnel Marine Corps (RPMC) funds approved by HQMC/Programs and Resources (P&R). Entry level RPMC funds are identified as Category-F pay-group funds. The amount of fiscal year funds budgeted for Non-Prior Service entry level training is based on the six thousand plus fiscal year accessions required to support Marine Forces Reserve.

As a result of the HQMC/RAP-hosted Fiscal Year 2001 (FY01) Reserve Recruiting and Retention Task Force (RRRTF) conference, HQMC/RAP began managing a program known as the Reserve Marines Awaiting Training-Reconnaissance (RMAT-Recon) program. Prior to this RRRTF, there was no program designed to manage Non-Prior Service entry level enlisted personnel through the training pipeline for PMOS 0321. Although a RMAT-Recon program was designed, administrative policies were not established.

Entry level training required for a Reserve Reconnaissance Marine includes recruit training, Basic Rifleman School (MOS 0311), Basic Reconnaissance Course (BRC), Survive Evade Resist Escape (SERE) School, and Basic Airborne School. After completing basic rifleman school (MOS 0311), a Reserve Reconnaissance Marine is transferred to one of three Reserve Marines Awaiting Training-Recon (RMAT-Recon) sites for duty. The three sites are located at Fourth Reconnaissance Battalion, San Antonio, TX; Third Force Reconnaissance Company, Mobile, AL; and Fourth Force Reconnaissance Company, Kaneohe Bay, HI. After checking into a RMAT-Recon site, the Marine commences pre-BRC training. When the individual is deemed fit by the RMAT-Recon site instructor staff, he is sent to attend the BRC. Upon completion of the BRC, the Marine will attend SERE

school and basic airborne school. The individual has then completed the basic requirements for a Reconnaissance Marine required for the RMAT-Recon program and will be transferred to a reserve component status to fulfill his reserve duty obligation (i.e. one drill weekend a month, two weeks of annual training a summer) for the remainder of his enlistment contract.

During this initial entry level training period, the Reserve Reconnaissance Marine is in an active-duty status funded by HQMC/RAP Category-F funds. Due to limited Category-F funds per fiscal year, it is crucial that an individual completes the entire entry-level training pipeline within an eighteen month period, or HQMC/RAP may exceed its fiscal year allocation of funds. In previous years, the absence of a balanced working relationship between HQMC/RAP and the three RMAT-Recon sites, led to a mismanagement of personnel and funds spent on the RMAT-Recon program. The three RMAT-Recon sites had different pre-BRC standards to determine if a Marine was qualified to attend BRC, thus some individuals were in the entry level training pipeline longer than others, negatively affecting fiscal year category-F funds spent. Some RMAT-Recon sites were sending Marines who failed the BRC once, back for a second and sometimes a third attempt at completing the

course. This also impacted the amount of category-F funds spent for entry level personnel. Billeting and mess facilities at each RMAT-Recon site were drastically different and were not logical or fiscally sound. For example, one site would assign RMAT-Recon personnel to quarters in civilian hotels, while another site would use Army barracks. The amounts of appropriations required to support an individual billeted in a civilian hotel and an Army barracks are significantly different. From a manpower management perspective, HQMC/RAP had difficulty receiving monthly personnel reports from the three RMAT-Recon sites that would assist in efficiently managing and budgeting for the entire RMAT-Recon population currently in the training pipeline. Instructors for some RMAT-Recon sites were Reserve personnel brought on active duty orders to support the instructor cadre. Locating instructors was sometimes difficult which would contribute to a decrease in tempo of Reserve Marines through the training pipeline. The aforementioned concerns led HQMC/RAP to research a more fiscally sound course of action for managing the RMAT-Recon program. As with many reserve component processes similar to the active component, HQMC/RAP researched how the active component entry level training pipeline for reconnaissance men was conducted.

The active component entry level training process is much more centralized and manageable. On day eighteen of training at the Infantry Training Battalions' Schools of Infantry, representatives from both First and Second Reconnaissance Battalions go to their respective School of Infantry and solicit volunteers. Volunteers who pass a reconnaissance screening test complete the basic rifleman course at the School of Infantry and then report to either First or Second Recon Battalion for assignment to the active component Recon Marines Awaiting Training Program (RMAT). The active component RMAT locations at First and Second Reconnaissance Battalions do not struggle with the same billeting and mess facility problems that the Reserve RMAT-Recon do. Management and accountability of individual active component Marines in RMAT is more feasible because all personnel live and eat in the RMAT training area. Instructors for the active component RMAT programs are not difficult to find since a number of existing reconnaissance men already belong to the reconnaissance battalions.

HQMC/RAP is currently working with HQMC/Plans Policies and Operations (PP&O), Expeditionary Policies Branch (POE) proposing to integrate the Reserve Marines Awaiting Training Reconnaissance program with the active component RMAT program. This would facilitate efficient management

of Reserve Reconnaissance Marines through the entry level training pipeline, and more important, save both time and money. No longer will HQMC/RAP worry about three separate Reserve RMAT-Recon sites conducting independent training and poor accountability of Reserve Marines in training. With the current operational tempo of Reserve component personnel in support of the Global War on Terror, the active component and reserve component integration could benefit each component in the long run. Since both active and reserve components will have served together during the entry level training process, they will have built a cohesive relationship that will continue to carry over to operational forces together.

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